MPF - 1.2001

Paul Kahn

State of New Jersey

Christine Todd Whitman
Governor

Department of Environmental Protection

Robert C. Shinn, Jr.
Commissioner

SEP 24 1998

Richard L. Caspe, Director
Emergency and Remedial Response Division
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region II
290 Broadway
New York, New York 10007-1866

Re: Removal Request – M P F Incorporated
aka: Meadowlands Plating Finishing Incorporated
890 Paterson Plank Road
East Rutherford, Bergen County

Dear Director Caspe:

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) hereby submits the M P F Incorporated site ("site") for CERCLA removal action consideration. This referral is written verification of the verbal request for United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assistance requested on September 10, 1998 by the Department. The following information supports the removal request.

The site is an abandoned metal plating facility located at 890 Paterson Plank Road in East Rutherford, Bergen County. M P F Incorporated was a tenant that operated from the site and ceased manufacturing operations in December 1997. The building was abandoned with all waste streams and production equipment left at the facility. The property is located in a highly populated industrial and commercial area. The nearest residence is located within ¼ mile of the site. A small tributary of the Hackensack River is located approximately 300 feet from the property. The site is listed as Block 105.01, Lot 4 on the tax map of East Rutherford. The owner of record is Top Notch Realty.

On September 1, 1998 the property owner, Virginia Scaglione of Top Notch Realty, detected a leak from a nitric acid tank at the M P F facility and notified the Department's hotline of the incident. The Department's Bureau of Emergency Response (BER) responded to the incident and met with the owner of the property and Department personnel from the RCRA Enforcement Program. An inspection of the facility verified that a 1,000-gallon nitric acid tank had developed a slow leak. Approximately 5 gallons of material has spilled onto the concrete floor. The spill has spread to an area where additional drums containing corrosives were stored. In addition, five leaking 55-gallon drums of corrosive materials were observed in close vicinity to the nitric acid tank. Initially, the owner of the property was reluctant to address the spill but ultimately agreed to hire an environmental contractor. A scope of work was established which included the following activities:

1) Transfer the material from the leaking nitric acid tank to another suitable portable above ground tank.
2) Over-pack the five leaking 55-gallon drums.
3) Remediate the spilled nitric acid on the concrete floor.
4) Construct a containment berm across an adjacent exit door to prevent off-site migration of any of the spilled material.

Personnel from the BER remained at the site until off-loading operations were completed.

On September 2, 1998, personnel from the BER returned to the site to conduct a more thorough inspection of the facility. Inspection of the building's exterior revealed the following:

1) Two 30-cubic yard roll-offs containing dried sodium hydroxide plating sludge contaminated with chromium.
2) One 20-cubic yard roll-off containing dried sodium hydroxide plating sludge contaminated with mercury.
3) One box trailer containing sixty-six 55-gallon open head drums filled with sodium hydroxide sludge contaminated with heavy metals.
4) Two 5,000 gallon fiberglass underground storage tanks which are partially buried that were almost filled to capacity with nickel plating waste.
5) Numerous empty 55-gallon drums which had contained corrosive materials.

Inspection of the building's interior revealed the following:

1) A former chemistry lab contained numerous containers of corrosive and oxidizing material that were in extremely poor condition.
2) The building contained forty-seven open top mixing top mixing tanks which contained the following materials; sodium hydroxide, sodium dichromate, copper cyanide solution, chromic acid, sulfuric acid magnesium hexaflorosulfate, sodium pyrophosphate, nitric acid, sodium mexa-silicate, hydrochloric acid and sodium hypochlorite.
3) Several above ground storage tanks containing sodium hydroxide plating sludge.
4) Several drums of cyanide material.
5) Twenty-seven 85-gallon overpacks of corrosive waste.
6) Numerous 30 and 55-gallon drums of assorted corrosive material in extremely poor condition.
7) Four waste pits approximately 20 feet by 75 feet in length filled with mixed corrosive waste material.

At the time of the inspection, the owner of the facility was conducting salvage operations. BER personnel observed that workers without personal chemical protection or proper hazardous materials training were conducting salvaging activities. OSHA was notified of the violations. Also, the owner notified BER personnel that there was no plan to remove any of the hazardous materials from the site. In the process of salvage operations, materials were being moved from vats into other containers at the site to allow for the salvage of the equipment.

On September 8, 1998 BER personnel requested that EPA personnel conduct a site visit to determine if the site would be removal action eligible in the event that the owner failed to properly remediate the site. The EPA representative indicated that the site would be eligible for a removal action based on the material present at the site and the receptors present in the area.

On September 10, 1998 the Department contacted EPA and requested assistance to conduct a removal action at the site.

On September 11, 1998 Department personnel met with representatives from EPA, the US Coast Guard, EPA 's contractor and the State of New Jersey, Division of Criminal Justice. EPA's contractor and the US Coast Guard collected samples from the various vats and drums for Haz-Cat identification. The NJ Division of Criminal Justice conducted a follow-up inspection to an ongoing criminal investigation. During this inspection it was noted that containment pits, which previously had been observed to contain hazardous waste liquids, were showing significantly lower levels of liquids. It is suspected that the containment pits are not structurally sound.

EPA agreed to assume oversight responsibility for the site. According to recent information provided by EPA representatives, salvage operations at the site have ceased. EPA representatives indicated that a CERCLA funded removal action will be initiated since it does not appear that the former operator or the owner of the property have the financial assets to conduct the cleanup and proper disposal of the hazardous materials at the site.

As previously mentioned, this referral serves as written verification of the above referenced emergency situation and the Department's request for the EPA to sample, characterize and dispose of all hazardous substances found at the site in such a way as to safeguard the local population. In addition, it is

requested that EPA perform any additional investigatory and remedial work at the site as deemed appropriate.

Should your staff require additional information please have them contact Janet Smolenski of the Bureau of Field Operations, Case Assignment section at (609) 292-2943.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Van Fossen
Assistant Director
Discharge Response Element

C: Bruce Sprague, Branch Chief, Removal Action Branch, EPA
Richard Salkie, Branch Chief, Response and Prevention Branch, EPA
George Zachos, Superfund Integration Manager, EPA
Susan Boyle, Director, Division of Responsible Party Site Remediation, DEP
Chuck Deweese, Director, Division of Enforcement Field Operations, DEP
Tom Brady, HSMS 1, RCRA Enforcement – Northern Region, DEP
Stan Delikat, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Emergency Response, DEP
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